

Indy's Urban Employment Crisis

Unemployment in
urban Indianapolis
is as much as

21% vs 3.9%

National average
of unemployment

MAJOR ISSUES:

- Employing Ex-Offenders
- Making Transportation Work
- Preparation and Re-training
- Help for the Homeless

MEET THE HEAVY LIFTERS:

- RecycleForce
- Merchandise Warehouse
- Jobs for Life
- New Life Development Ministry
- The City of Indianapolis

UNITE INDY

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*We Can Make a
Difference...*
TOGETHER!

Connecting hearts, minds, and hands to meet needs in our community



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ITEMS NEEDED

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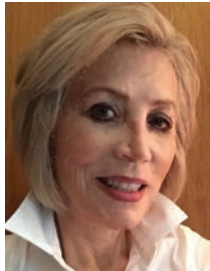


UNITE INDY

241 W. 38th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46208

We Can Make a Difference... TOGETHER!

Welcome to UNITE INDY's URBAN EMPLOYMENT CRISIS FORUM



By Nancy Cotterill

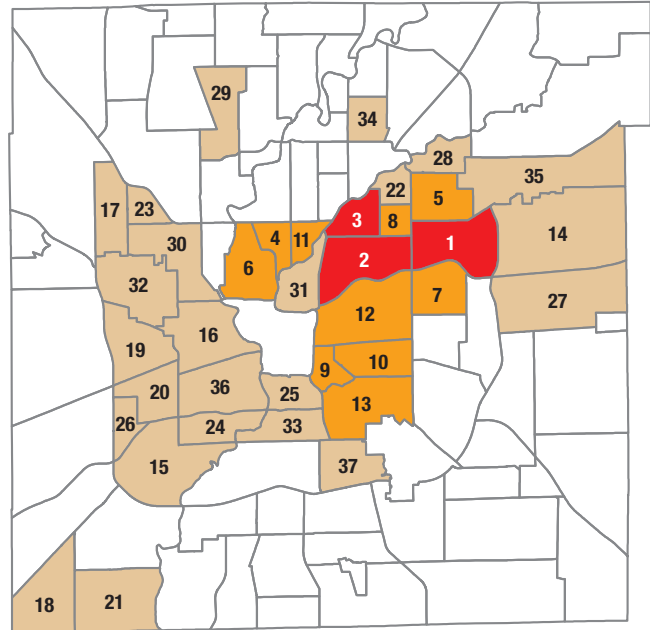
As we celebrate increased muscle in our economy and the lowest unemployment rate in almost 40 years, it is shocking to see the unemployment rates in the urban core of our city. No job equals poverty. Poverty breeds hopelessness, drug use, and sometimes crime. Worst of all, it crushes the dreams of the young men and women who grow up without basic economic benefits.

We say that our urban unemployment rate is four, even five times higher than the national average, but in some neighborhoods it is higher than that. Note that as you read, you will see percentages in this report that differ from each other. That is because people are accessing differing measurement tools. Some use last year's unemployment information or a five year average, and often compare it to the current national number of 3.9% unemployed.¹ Just know that the numbers of urban unemployed are astronomical next to any measurement of the national average.²

More than anything else, please remember that there are people behind these percentages. These neighborhoods suffer from endemic poverty, and are home to a higher number of ex-offenders who often face extreme difficulty getting hired. Transportation issues and relational issues affect the job readiness of large portions of those who want to work, and many need training. But, just perhaps we could help to change the futures of many if we were able to change the way we do a few things. That is what this forum is about.

This graphic of Marion County Neighborhoods provides an idea of the difficulty faced in the urban neighborhoods people pass on their way to the symphony, or to IRT, or to a concert at White River State Park. It shows that 37 of the 99 neighborhoods in Marion County have unemployment rates between 10 and 21 percent. These aren't retirees living on their investments, these are individuals and families trying to keep their heads above water.

We can help.³



- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 21%
1. Arlington Woods | 15%
10. Christian Park
11. Mapleton Fall Creek | 12%
22. Devon
23. International Marketplace
24. Maywood
25. Near Southside
26. Park Fletcher
27. Warren East |
| 20%
2. Martindale Brightwood
3. Meadows | 14%
14. Far Eastside
15. Mars Hill
16. Near Westside
17. Northwest High School | 11%
28. Brendonwood
29. Crooked Creek
30. Eagledale
31. Near Northside
32. Speedway |
| 18%
4. Crown Hill | 13%
18. Camby
19. Garden City
20. Stout Field
21. West Newton | 10%
33. Garfield Park
34. Glendale
35. Lawrence
36. West Indianapolis
37. University Heights |
| 17%
5. Devington
6. Near NW-Riverside | | |
| 16%
7. Eastside
8. Forest Manor
9. Fountain Square | | |

1. As of May 2018, the date of the UNITE INDY Urban Employment Crisis Forum. 2. Indy Vitals is the source of the 21 percent number on the cover of this magazine as well as those that appear in the key to the graphic above. IndyVitals' unemployment rates come from American Community Survey responses collected and averaged over a five year period from 2012 through 2016. 3. This publication is a compilation of the conversations held by UNITE INDY at Brookside Community Church in May 2018. We hosted many of the most knowledgeable people involved in their fields. The transcript of that event has been edited for clarity and brevity. *Unemployment rates courtesy of IndyVitals (© Copyright 2016 Indy Vitals and The Polis Center at IUPUI).



Indy's Urban

"...this isn't just a talk. This is the beginning of a whole process. What we want to accomplish tonight is to walk away with a couple of key concepts that have a real likelihood of moving the needle in a positive direction for those who are suffering from lack of employment."

JIM COTTERILL: Thank you for joining us as we dig into the incredibly important issue of double digit unemployment in our urban core—a place where employment is needed so badly and is so hard to find.

UNITE INDY is working to connect hearts, minds and hands to meet needs in our community. So we're interfacing with city government, churches, both urban and suburban. We're working with businesses. We're working with the media, trying to tie all of us together, to start moving in the same direction on the problems that breed hopelessness in our neighbors.

What we're really finding out in the work we've been doing for a little over a year now, is that there are a lot of people who don't understand what the needs are in our city. It's not like they're trying to look past the problems, they really don't even know what some of our

neighbors face every day, and when these things are brought to their attention they do care and they do want to help.

We're developing more awareness every day through these forums, through constant connection with those at work in urban areas and through the media, because it will take all these efforts to make Indianapolis more than the Crossroads of America, to make Indianapolis the Heart of America, a place where we don't let our neighbors in need suffer without doing all we can.

So back to the topic that is so important in this effort: Indy's urban employment crisis: According to the U.S. Labor Department, we have hit what is considered full employment in the U.S. Right now there are job openings for every person who wants a job. So, if that's true, why is the unemployment rate at 14, 15 and 18 percent in some of our neighborhoods?



Employment Crisis

In a recent UNITE INDY meeting with about 50 urban pastors we asked them to list the top three issues they face in their neighborhoods. Top place was the need for jobs. Second and third were also the need for jobs. There is nothing that concerns them more than the lack of employment in their communities, limiting the urban neighborhoods in which they work and creating the poverty that surrounds them.

You will find that we will talk a lot about ex-offenders and their inability to find work. That's because there is often a higher number of people returning from incarceration into urban communities. When they cannot find jobs, their families suffer, they suffer, poverty in the area rises and often it ends in a cycle of recidivism that can fuel generational poverty and want.

So this isn't just a talk. This is just the beginning of a whole



Vision Communications provided video services for the forum and many of the photos, as they train young people in these skills.

process. What we want to accomplish tonight is to be able to walk away with a couple of key concepts or new approaches that

have a real likelihood of moving the needle in a positive direction for those who are suffering from lack of employment.

KURT MOORE: PRISON TO PROSPERITY

JIM COTTERILL: Now to give you some perspective, I would like you to hear the story of a man who has been through difficult times, a man who has raised himself up in order to help others, I would like to introduce Kurt Moore. *(Audience applauded.)*

Thanks for being with us tonight, Kurt.

KURT MOORE: Thank you.

JIM COTTERILL: I understand that you were a guest of our State's correctional system for a period of time; would you tell us about that?

When I went in, I was ghetto fabulous, I had cars, I had money and everything. But when I was released, I was dead broke, 40 years old, back living with my momma and looking for employment.

KURT MOORE: Yeah. Not the state. I served 13 years in federal prison. I was sentenced—well, I was arrested, convicted, and sentenced in 1996 for possessing 600 something-odd grams of powder cocaine, 60 something grams of crack cocaine, and carrying a gun in relation to a drug trafficking crime.

I was sent first to Manchester, Kentucky, where I served three years at a medium-high institution, and then I was transferred where I

served ten years in Ashland, Kentucky Federal Prison.

During my incarceration, God worked wonders through me. As a matter of fact, I gave my life to Christ right downtown in the county jail while I was still fighting my case. I was baptized in that orange jumpsuit, and I haven't left yet and won't leave.

I know some people say that it's just jailhouse religion—well, the same jailhouse religion that I was practicing in there, is the same one I'm practicing now, and He's been opening up doors and blessing me every since.

I'm a firm believer in taking responsibility for my mistakes, first and foremost, I was wrong. The lifestyle that I was leading was a lifestyle that was part of the problem.

I was not brought up that way. I was brought up in this community—in 46218, just over in the next zip code. I played at Brookside Park and Wheeler's Boys Club. I graduated from Arlington High School, where I played baseball and basketball. I went off to college and

played a little bit of college basketball, and then I returned home to become part of the problem.

Like so many others, what lured me to the lifestyle was the money and friends too, but it was the money. We were chasing that so-called dream of having everything without having to work for it.

JIM COTTERILL: How long were you incarcerated?

KURT MOORE: I was gone 13 years and 3 months.

JIM COTTERILL: And then you came back to Indianapolis?

KURT MOORE: Yes. I was 27 when I left. I came home, I was 40.

JIM COTTERILL: And did you look for employment when you came home?

KURT MOORE: Yes. You know, and the funny thing is I think—well, I know that because I gave my life to Christ, from that point on, even though I was in prison, I began to prepare myself for the day that I was going to be released.

So while I was incarcerated, not only was I a strong part of the church inside the institution, but I also was given the opportunity to receive my associate's degree in business. I took hundreds of different business courses and hundreds of different courses on theology and religion and so forth.

I put myself in circles that were

positive circles within the institution. Because every day, I did my time as if I was going home tomorrow. I wanted to be prepared for the time that I got out. So of course, being prepared for some kind of employment was a big thing.

When I went in, so to speak, for lack of better terms, I was ghetto fabulous, as the young people say. You know, I thought I had it—I had cars, I had money and everything. But when I was released, I was dead broke, 40 years old, back living with my momma and looking for employment.

JIM COTTERILL: And how did that go for you? What kind of obstacles did you have to face when you came home?

KURT MOORE: There were plenty of obstacles. The blessing of it was, right before I was released, I wrote everybody that I thought was prominent in our community. Pastor Jeffrey Johnson [Eastern Star Church], Dr. Eugene White, who was head of IPS at the time, and my pastor, Darryl K. Webster, at Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church.

It was Pastor Webster who extended his arm and gave me a hand up that first Sunday when I got out, and I went to his church. He put me in a position to get that first job with another member of the church, Travis Reed.

Now, I didn't know anything about doing auto bodywork, or anything about cars, but he gave me a job washing them. Then he gave me a beat up van to drive to get back and forth to work.

Well, I took that van and I created K-Love's Auto Detailing. So just to fast forward, eight years later—I've been home eight years now, I service probably 40 automobile dealerships around



PHOTO BY VISION COMMUNICATIONS

Kurt Moore tells Jim about his passage from college, to prison, to company owner, to philanthropist.

town. I've probably hired over 200 or 300 men and women and kids when they are out of school for the summer, mostly out of this area, and a lot of people that have come home from prison.

Right now, I'm also hiring a lot of gentlemen who are homeless, who work on my mobile wash van and go out to the dealerships, washing cars there and also bringing cars back to my location and detailing them.

So, even though some doors were closed in my face, I knew that this was going to happen, but I refused to let that stop me. I think when the average person gets out of prison, he may not have done the character building necessary to deal with that door closing in his face. I think a lot of times, when they get that first door closed in their face or the second one, then they just go back to what they know, and that's not a positive thing.

I think that the main thing is to understand what I always tell my guys: You're not going to get rich washing cars for me, but if I can help you any kind of way to get a better job, please allow me to help you.

I always let them know there's a difference between a job and a career. A job may get you along the way for a short period of time but a career can last almost a lifetime. It can take you places that you never believed you could go. But in order to get the careers that are needed, more training in the trades needs to be available and more people are needed to walk alongside of them to show them which way to go.

But the biggest blessing, and I don't want to take up too much time—

JIM COTTERILL: No, it's all right.

Kurt Moore continued on page 19

DAVID PALMER: WOODWORKING & WORSHIP

JIM COTTERILL: Next, I'd like to introduce David Palmer, who with his wife Cindy, lives in the Brookside neighborhood and has been a catalyst for change through training and employment there. So great to see you David! You started something called Purposeful Design. It's on your T-shirt.

DAVID PALMER: Yes, there we go.

with an addiction or other kinds of problems that come along with that, but have found some freedom from their addiction and are ready to get back to work. Many of them face obstacles to finding work, and so we hire and we train them to make beautiful hand-crafted custom furniture, that we then sell to create a revenue stream, which pays them as employees.

the board of Wheeler Mission for a long time, and visited Wheeler Mission, and lead a lot of bible studies there.

And when I would go, I would be with men, and I'd say, "how are you doing?" And very often the answer was, "I'm looking for a job."

And I just felt—when I heard that—I felt sorry for them, and I wished that I had some magic dust that I could sprinkle in the air and there'd be some jobs that would appear, but I was just dumb-founded by the thing, by the situation.

I feel like God urged me at one point, moving me to ask him about it, because I, really felt clueless, but felt like I ought to pray about this, and my prayer was simply, God, what do you say about this? And God is there something that you have for me in this? I was hoping he'd say, "Nope, I've got nothing for you. Keep doing what you're doing."

But after I prayed that, God began to move, as he does, he's famous for moving, and some other men started praying this with me. Meanwhile, I was just doing something on the internet one day and I bumped into this idea of taking old pallets and breaking them down and making kind of cool furniture, cool urban kind of furniture—repurposing wood.

And so we thought, well, maybe we could train—it looked kind of easy, and we thought maybe we

I had been on the board of Wheeler Mission.

I would be with men, and I'd say, "how are you doing?"

And very often the answer was, "I'm looking for a job."

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sprinkle in the air and there'd be some jobs that

would appear.

JIM COTTERILL: I bet you knew that when you put it on. Would you do us a favor and just tell us the story of Purposeful Design?

DAVID PALMER: Sure. Thank you. Purposeful Design is a not-for-profit organization, and it exists for two reasons, one to create jobs for some men in our city who don't have one; and secondly, to do on-the-job discipling. And we're located a short distance from here, at 16th and Sherman, and what we do is we hire men out of a place like Wheeler Mission, for example, maybe men who have struggled

JIM COTTERILL: So you were a furniture expert when you started this; right?

DAVID PALMER: (Laughs) No, I wasn't. I didn't and don't know anything about furniture or making furniture or woodworking or production.

JIM COTTERILL: Didn't you start having guys make tables out of pallet wood or something?

DAVID PALMER: We did. We did. Purposeful Design really started with a simple prayer. I had been on

can train some men to do that, and maybe somebody would want to buy this stuff. So that is where we started. It's not what we're doing now, but it's where we started.

JIM COTTERILL: Right. And didn't you just end up with a hefty contract with Salesforce when they moved into the Tower?

DAVID PALMER: We did!

JIM COTTERILL: You made beautiful conference tables for them.

DAVID PALMER: We did. We've been really fortunate. God has definitely put a wind in our sail, in spite of ourselves. This—what we're doing—is not the result of some great strategic plan or some profoundly well-executed business approach, but I think God has opened some doors, and some of our biggest customers are Eli Lilly and Salesforce and Purdue University and Notre Dame, and other businesses around.

And a quick story. A businessman up in the Salesforce Tower, was appreciating the beautiful furniture that Purposeful Design had made. And as he was pondering that he said, "Isn't it cool that this beautiful furniture here in this building was made by men who used to be homeless in front of the building?" And that's kind of what it's about.

JIM COTTERILL: That's amazing. So we're in a city where we get a lot of accolades for small business growth and economic development news, all being positive in a lot of ways, and Purposeful Design would look—if I just looked at where you started in this little church building and where you are now, in a much bigger facility and all the people that you have there, you might think on the surface that



PHOTO BY VISION COMMUNICATIONS

David Palmer tells Jim Cotterill about how he was led to start Purposeful Designs, a company that employs former addicts and homeless men in a nurturing environment.

that's really what it's all about, bottom line, a business growth story. But in your words, what is it all about?

DAVID PALMER: Well, for me, it's a walk of faith. It's—very personally, it's a walk of faith. I didn't come up with some big idea here and I don't have any ideas now, so I think it has to be a walk of faith. The Lord has led us and it's been a good character builder. Kurt, you were talking about character development, that's what I need, character development, and to deal with the little things that trip me up along the way.

Like at one point—we'd been really fortunate. Business had grown a lot. The last two years, more than double each year, and so that's good. But there was a season in that period when things

got dry—in business, sometimes things get dry, and that's not a happy and fun place to be.

And so I felt for a while like a loser and I started trying to look deep within to see why am I aching so much over this? And with the help of the Lord, it was revealed to me that my biggest concern at that point, my biggest reason for sorrow in the midst of the downturn, was that I was afraid that my friends wouldn't think I was accomplishing anything significant. So—a man full of pride and that kind of stuff. It's all a lesson I have learned in terms of character building, and I keep learning.

This is more than a business for me, personally. And another part of my walk and a revelation to me was that, on the other hand, when

David Palmer continued on page 20



ROUND TABLE: THE URBAN UNEMPLOYMENT CRISIS

JIM COTTERILL: Now I'll get out of the way to make room for the experts who can shine a light on some of the issues we face. For that, I'd like to introduce Nancy Cotterill who is co-founder of UNITE INDY. She has been my partner in marriage and parenting and life for 40 something—I won't say how many years now. Take it away, Nancy.

NANCY COTTERILL: Okay. He's told you who I am. He didn't tell you what I do. Day-to-day, I'm Jim's understudy, his backup singer, his back seat driver, which he hates.

JIM COTTERILL: Oh, yeah.

NANCY COTTERILL: —and cleanup hitter for the forums, so that's why I'm here tonight. While I like to joke, unemployment and poverty are not laughing matters. As most people are aware, our

country is now enjoying the lowest unemployment since 1982. In April the rate dropped to 3.9 percent and there are help wanted signs everywhere.

But in most of our poorest neighborhoods, unemployment rates are higher. They're not twice as high, they're not three times as high, they're between four and five times as high as the rest of the country. Just last year, the Crown Hill neighborhood had an unemployment rate of 23 percent. And while it has improved over the last year, it's still at 18 percent.

The unemployment crisis we have in many of our urban neighborhoods is a big contributor to the high poverty rates that are in those areas as well. Poverty and unemployment go hand in hand. So to understand and learn about some of the people and companies that

are really impacting this situation, let me introduce our panel.

First is **Gregg Keesling**, who founded RecycleForce in 2003. The company advocates for and employs ex-offenders.

Jennifer Foley is Director of Wellness for Merchandise Warehouse, which supplies warehousing facilities as it shepherds ex-offenders.

Pastor John Girton of Christ Missionary Baptist Church of Indianapolis, is active in Unite For Change ministry and offers training in something we'll talk about tonight, which is Jobs for Life.

Eugene Potter of New Life Development Ministries, he is also a pastor and gives spiritual support and training in the construction trades to those returning from prison.

Also with us is **Pastor David**



Cederquist, our host this evening, is Co-Pastor of Brookside Community Church and engaged in all areas of improvement in the Brookside Near Eastside Neighborhood.

And **Damon Lane** who works to help re-entrants and to improve our neighborhoods under the auspices of the Indianapolis Office of Public Health & Safety.

Thank you so much, everybody, for being here and for lending us your insights and expertise. If I could start with David.

According to Indy Vitals, the Near Eastside Neighborhood we are in right now has a 38 percent poverty rate. Maybe you can start us off with what you have found to be issues that are keeping the people here unemployed at such a high rate?

DAVID CEDERQUIST: Sure. I think a lot of the issues that we find in our ministry with family and individuals is access. While there is a lot of ignorance around jobs for ex-offenders, also, a lot of employers

don't want to put up with relational issues that do come up. For example, when a guy gets ten bucks in his pocket, and he's prone to addiction, you know, there's not the support in a job situation to put up with a guy who relapses.

There's just a lot of ignorance around the struggle when it comes to generationally poor individuals. And I bring up all the barriers relationally because really that's what means something to them. I could probably give you four other things that are huge barriers, like, transportation, lack of jobs in the neighborhood, etc.

I mean, I wish we had, you know—I wish Purposeful Design would hire 800 people tomorrow, you know, but it just doesn't work that way. And we would love to have great employers like Dave that would really understand the plight and the issues that our families face and our neighborhood faces, but the reality is a lot of people don't want to put up with it so they just turn a blind eye to it and stay away from it as best they can and create

policies that won't cost an organization more money.

NANCY COTTERILL: There's a lot of anecdotal evidence that the areas with the highest poverty also have got the highest concentration of ex-offenders who are returning to those communities. So we have urban areas that are already pretty devoid of jobs, available jobs, and we have that many more people coming in who need jobs.

Gregg, I know this is a passion of yours. Can you give us some insight on how RecycleForce deals with this issue?

GREGG KEESLING: Well, we only hire people that are referred to us by Criminal Justice Oversight and people that are deemed medium to high risk and we're a subsidized employment program. We work with the State and the Federal Government to subsidize the employment of people coming home.

And this is the best time because we call our model A, B, C,

[Any job, Better job, Career] so it's any job when you come to RecycleForce, we then work with temp to permanent. Keys to Work is the name of our temporary company that gets people into temp work. Then hopefully some get hired permanently.

But during this period of time, Congress authorized a big study on RecycleForce, and I'm very proud to say that the study found the more people that we had working in these temporary employment opportunities—the lower recidivism rate went, by a pretty significant amount.

I should say this was a random control trial. So a thousand people who left the Department of Correction agreed to be in the study, they were randomized 500 to us and 500 to the others. So I think that the key answer is keeping people working.

We put quite a bit of attention and money into our corporate culture, which is to provide a family environment where employees can find acceptance, opportunity and purpose.

— Jennifer Foley

This isn't a panacea, we're not getting people into the perfect job and make 40 or \$50,000 a year, where they can really live at the middle class overnight. But we're seeing small steps where people are earning 6 and 7, \$8,000 over the year. They're getting some food stamps. They're staying out of jail, and over time, they make this—this passage.

NANCY COTTERILL: Kind of baby steps?

GREGG KEESLING: Baby steps, yep.

NANCY COTTERILL: Jennifer, the problem for decades was that nobody wanted to hire someone with a record. How did Merchandise Warehouse begin employing people who had gone to prison?

JENNIFER FOLEY: We actually stumbled into it. I would love to have had some great 'wow' moment, but we had a packaging company that was inside of our warehouse and we were desperately needing people to staff it and we were running out of people.

So we started collaborating with Edna Martin Christian Center, and they had some people who had been trained and they sent them over to work on our packaging line. Our packaging line actually became on-the-job training experience so that we could actually vet



employees from their experience on the line.

NANCY COTTERILL: Is there some special structure, or do you do anything in the vein of religious discussion to help these people?

JENNIFER FOLEY: Yes. So one of the things I love about Merchandise Warehouse is that we really invest in our employees, and we believe in having our employees be the best version of themselves. So we put

quite a bit of attention and money into our corporate culture, which is to provide a family environment where employees can find acceptance, opportunity and purpose through programs that are on site in our company to help our employees to be successful.

NANCY COTTERILL: Eugene, your ministry actually trains men who need a second chance. How do you find these people, or do they find you, and tell us about how you're training them?

EUGENE POTTER: We came here—we came back to Indianapolis about ten years ago. But our construction company started back in Baltimore—that was 28 years ago. We needed help and we met this guy who had come out of prison after being incarcerated for six years. He didn't have anything. So we trained him in the skills he needed and we created a business model that featured a program in which we were training and employing ex-offenders—without entirely meaning to in the beginning. It just took off. We saw that skills training really meant something in terms of the growth of that particular person.

During the 20 years in Baltimore of training and employing people who needed a second chance, we trained and produced almost 35 men in the construction trades and employed them. We had 15 jobs going at a time all over Baltimore.

And so when I came back to Indianapolis, it just started happening. And we got an opportunity to have a building that we use as a construction education center to train the men. It takes about six to eight months for them to really get a skill set.

Over the last few years, many of the people we've trained have gone out and are running their own

businesses in the trades they learned with us. Now, we are actually hiring them to do our subcontracting work.

NANCY COTTERILL: And we're excited about working with you, too on our new UNITE INDY office.

EUGENE POTTER: And it's going to be pretty when we finish it.

NANCY COTTERILL: It's going to be beautiful.

NANCY COTTERILL: So John—Pastor G, studies show that a lack of early employment in a young man's life is a big big contributor to an initial criminal action that results in prison. In fact, one statistic says that 1,300 juveniles return to their communities after release from Indiana prisons every year.

How do we get kids into the work force early, and does Jobs for Life kind of click into any of this?

JOHN GIRTON: Oh, yeah, it clicks—Jobs for Life clicks into all of it. Jobs for Life is a nationally-recognized research and evidence-based curriculum that relies on the church. It relies on the community and it relies on the business community to really wrap their arms around these young people.

One of the statistics that I wrote down—you know, we talked about the unemployment rate not being in the underserved communities, nowhere near what it is throughout the nation, well, we localized our research in 46208, and we have a 18.7 percent unemployment rate, but when we look at 15 to 19 year olds, it's 70 percent.

NANCY COTTERILL: Unbelievable.

JOHN GIRTON: It's 70 percent. And we also look at the poverty rate, which, of course, you said here is 38 percent in this area. Where we were, it's 31 percent, but over 52



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— *John Griton*

percent of those who are in poverty are 17 and under.

So when you kind of juxtapose those numbers, what that says is that we have a recipe for disaster. You're dashing dreams. You're eliminating hopes when we're not paying attention to these young people.

So what we're doing with Jobs for Life is we have (and a lot of the people who are part of this are in the room) we have coaches. We have facilitators. We have wrap-around folks. We have people who have resources who are literally wrapping their arms around these young people, because it's not just about jobs, it's about soft skills.

It's about identity. It's about community. It's about character, and it's about us taking the time to let those young people know that we care enough to spend the time to do what it takes, to not only know who you are, but we want to know what your dreams are. We want to know what your aspirations are. We want to lower the barrier of entry so that we can actually reach that young person and let them know that we're not just trying to throw the Bible at them, but actually share with them what they need to know, not only to get a job, but to get a job, a better job and a career.

NANCY COTTERILL: Damon, what is the City doing along these lines? I know there is a substantial youth summer employment program.

DAMON LANE: That particular program has worked very well and it has been growing every year. But speaking of some other things, not just with the youth program, we went into the jail and we did what we deemed as making connections taking resources into the jail. We had a couple of employers, health-care representatives, child support information—you name it. So we're looking to do that quarterly and eventually monthly for these guys. All this relates to House Bill 1006. A lot of people will have to serve their time right here in Marion County Jail so they will not go to DOC [Department of Correction].

So, therefore, we want to get those guys as soon as possible. And the pod that we're working on is actually a reentry pod. These guys are all getting out within 90 days, so the men we just served recently will be—one of them is already out. He got out Thursday. So we got him connected and that's going very well.

Another program that the city is a part of is in partnership with the Indianapolis Chamber [of Commerce], and it's called the REDi Program [the Re-Entry Entrepreneurship Development Initiative]. This program teaches men who are in our jail kind of what Mr. Moore's story was about. It teaches entrepreneurship. It's not just about employment. Some guys want to come out and start their own business, and that's what this REDi program does.

We have also intentionally started some work groups where we have partnerships, and what we're trying to do now is get in front of employers and talk about the tax abatements and things of that nature, and that's actually another acronym, HIRE, [Hoosier Initiative for Reentry] hire@dwd.in.gov.

There is just an array of things that the City is doing. Actually, my boss is sitting in the crowd. I told her I wouldn't call her out, the director of reentry, and she and I, are a part of a lot of

...we went into the jail and we did what we deemed as making connections taking resources into the jail. We had a couple of employers, healthcare representatives, child support information—you name it.

— *Damon Lane*



different work groups, and she's been—for me, anyway, an inspiration and a spark. So I can go and on and on about what the City is doing.

NANCY COTTERILL: Do you work at all in conjunction with the State with their HIRE effort?

DAMON LANE: Yes.

NANCY COTTERILL: I understand they've got a list that has grown to 1,100 businesses and placed 2,000 workers with a 97 percent retention rate, which is pretty amazing.

All the research says that the faster a person who's trying to reenter society gets a job, the better the chances are that they won't slip back into destructive ways. How fast can we get them a job?

We've got a bunch of people here that are involved in helping this situation, but people are still falling through the cracks; right? There's a quote on the back of the program about a man who said, "I couldn't lock down employment for the first six months after jail. I wept on the public bus one day. I felt I had failed as a man."

Thankfully this man made it because he got a job. But do you always have openings, Jennifer? I mean, is there always somebody you could hire?

JENNIFER FOLEY: Traditionally, we have had a high turnover rate. However, when we started the process of working with the packaging line and began hiring employees that had a criminal background or had been incarcerated, what we found out is that eventually of our ten top employees, six of them had been incarcerated, and we have found them to be extremely loyal. Our turnover rate has gone down. So, we don't always have openings to fill, but since we just opened another warehouse in Pendleton, we are currently looking for more employees.

NANCY COTTERILL: Which highlights another problem. You mentioned, it, David, transportation?

DAVID CEDERQUIST Oh, yeah.

NANCY COTTERILL: People—there are plenty of people here who need jobs, but they can't get to where the jobs are. Does anybody have any thoughts about that?

DAMON LANE: It just really kind of depends. Right now, it's construction season, as well as—Reverend Potter knows a lot about that. I'm talking specifically with a bunch of general contractors and some of them are in Westfield and Noblesville and those types of areas where the buses don't run. And that is more difficult.

But back to your point, as long as workers can get a on bus line, again, the City has an initiative where we provide wraparound services, bus passes. We work with IndyGo to get them, and then we distribute them to some of the programs, like, PACE, and those type of things.

JOHN GIRTON: You know, I think we also need to spend as much time connecting resources in relation to these gaps. Just an example of that piece there, I'm dealing with it right now on my phone as we sit here.

Once individuals know where to maybe go to try to find some kind of job, they'll keep hammering it or they'll share it with somebody else. Like you said, they'll start talking. And so what I try to do is I try to question as much as I can to find out what barrier someone has.

And involving the transportation issue, one of the things that I started to notice is that, for instance, we found a Walmart that would do some hiring—it's on Keystone, and no one had really paid attention to where the bus line was and when the bus stopped running and how long the Walmart stayed open and how late at night the employees had to work.

And we found another bus stop which was a ten-minute walk from the job. Which sounds great, but nobody thought through the fact that when it rains these people were going to a freezer to work, right? And so one of the things that I'm really trying to do with my team is to think through those gaps and the process because it's not that these folks are lazy or don't want to work. It's just that without personal transportation, it becomes so difficult to be where you need to be.

NANCY COTTERILL: So did you go to the city and get some kind of a change or to the bus company?

JOHN GIRTON: No, we didn't. We just tried to find another employer on the bus line that we could make work for those that needed jobs. We adjusted to the situation, because as you say, some of these cats, they need jobs now, and so, you know, we're pushing buttons and calling.

NANCY COTTERILL: Jobs now are important, but also, how much money you make is important. Studies that I've looked at say if you can make \$10 an hour, the recidivism rate is very low. If you make seven to ten, it's higher. If it's less than seven, they're practically gone out the door. So you could answer that question for me Gregg, how important is pay?

GREGG KEESLING: Pay is very critical, but it's also—on Day 1, a person needs a job, but they've also got to fulfill the criminal justice mandates. So on Day 1, you've got to meet with your community correction or home detention officer. You have to be fit for ankle bracelets. You've got to attend your theft class or your anger management classes and you have to coordinate those with a work schedule.

And I think often people have no idea that's going on, and that's—at RecycleForce and Keys to Work, what we're trying to do is create employment that can allow you to fulfill the criminal justice mandates that you've been ordered to fulfill, because often people are left in a position of choosing between their job and fulfilling what the courts ordered. And if you choose to go to work and not do what the courts have ordered, you're going to get violated and you're going to go back through a technical violation back into prison or jail.

NANCY COTTERILL: Okay. Here's another economic statistic for you.



We're trying to do is create employment that can allow you to fulfill the criminal justice mandates that you've been ordered to fulfill.

— *Gregg Keesling*

Families headed by single mothers were over five times more likely to be poor, and 85 percent of incarcerated youth come from families headed by single mothers.

There are many who think that not enough is being done about the foundational issue of family structure. With 40 percent of American babies being born to single moms now, no matter how great a job they do—and most single moms create a great home for their kids, but no matter how great, they still lack a male role model in the home. Somebody who goes out every day and does his work and brings home a paycheck to care for them. They lack the supervisory

nature of a father, the spiritual support, and most of all, to me, they lack the map they need to be great fathers themselves.

I direct my question perhaps to some of the ministers on this panel: How do we build support for or recognition of the importance of a two-parent family without undermining or offending those who choose to be single parents or have to be single parents?

EUGENE POTTER: That's a tough one. That's a tough one. I mean, it's so tough—when you burn so many bridges coming out and the family has discarded you and you're by yourself. I train men 95 percent of the time. I just hired a young lady

who came out of prison about seven months ago, and her desire is to help women. This is the first time I've been able to actually train a young lady. I've gotten some real insight.

One of the things is that we have to be, first, both strong together. The man has to be strong and the lady has to be strong enough to go into a relationship. My wife and I are working on 43 years. I know we have to be strong individually and come together collectively and do some things.

I think we should get them strong individually, and then start talking about parenting and relationship with a man. I know that's

being traditional, and I'm very traditional, but it's a hard thing to do.

None of the men who have come out to work with us has brought a child with him. But the lady always brings the child. One of the things that we're doing now is developing a training center, and a it's state-of-the-art—that is really good for both men and women.

Painters can make \$24 an hour. Your carpenters can make \$25 an hour. We're going to train those ladies to be able to take care of those families without the fella, then if she wants one, she can get him.

NANCY COTTERILL: In many cases, we see single moms who are working two or three jobs and so—you know they're having to take the kids to grandma, if they're lucky enough to have a nearby grandma. So it affects the children.

I think that the dilemma of the Evangelical church, which I would call it 'churchianity', has created this [two parent] idea of the family that is a total antidevelopment of what God is already doing in an urban community.

— *David Cederquist*

NANCY COTTERILL: David, do you have any thoughts on this?

DAVID CEDERQUIST Yeah. I—you might not like what I'm going to say, unfortunately. I think assuming that a child needs a dad in his, her life is the wrong way to think through the urban problem. I know kids who are in two-parent homes in Carmel who have ruined their

life for 15 years over drug addiction, and their dad was present but not.

I think that the dilemma of the Evangelical church, which I would call it 'churchianity', has created this [two parent] idea of the family that is a total antidevelopment of what God is already doing in an urban community.

I have experienced more family and more relationship in an urban environment than I ever have in my suburban and rural communities. And I think that kids in the urban context, in spite of the barriers of trauma and the dilemma of violence, and multiple previous incarcerations, I think there is greater resilience in the urban core, if we were to spend the time, and as a church family and be the church and not just expect that mom's got to get with a good dad.



And I think that it's—it's a travesty that we've imposed that on my community, specifically, to the point where it discourages moms in a place where they're doing one of the—a better job than my own mother did. And so I think it disparages what God is already doing in a community where there is this community support.

NANCY COTTERILL: And that's what the church does best—provide community support. However, you can't just, for political correctness, not report statistical proof that this is happening.

DAVID CEDERQUIST Yeah.

NANCY COTTERILL: And I think that most single moms are heroes of the first order who do their best to create a family environment on their own if they have to. Jennifer?

JENNIFER FOLEY: Yes, I'd like to add, as far as Merchandise Warehouse, we really believe in having a family environment, and I've noticed that there's a sense of family that starts to support each other.

We have an on-site chaplain who comes in and works with people. We have support groups. So we're actually going out to the community and bringing in the resources to our business that our employees need to be successful.

We have many single moms working for us. We have tuition reimbursement. So I see some—some real uplift now within the workplace to support them.

NANCY COTTERILL: Which, no doubt, creates an environment of enthusiasm around the job?

JENNIFER FOLEY: Yes, it does.

NANCY COTTERILL: John, how—how important is the "I want to go to work" thought in a person's mind? I mean, if you—whether it's recidivism you're trying to avoid, or whether it's just a person who maybe never had that model of somebody going to work every day, how important is it for them to want to be a success?

JOHN GIRTON: Oh, it's critical. One of the things about work is that it brings dignity to people's lives and purpose and I know that—you

know, I shared this with someone earlier today. For my own self, for a period of time, with not having employment led me to contemplating suicide because I couldn't take care of my family. And thank God, He intervened, but work is divine. It's Biblical, you know. It has its purpose, and when it is not there, it affects a person's identity. People are identified by what they do.

And when you don't quote/unquote do anything for a living, even if you're an entrepreneurial type and maybe you don't have your elevator speech together, if you can't say what you do, then in a lot of people's eyes, you are not valid.

So work is important because it gives one a foundational sense of I'm doing something that is contributing and taking care of my responsibilities. And when you take that away, you know, you really do take away the life blood of an individual.

GREGG KEESLING: And we live in the system. We're controlled by the system that we've created. We've had two really major wars, the war on poverty and the war on crime, and both of those have sort of clashed into each other.

Many of you know I lost my son in the war for Iraqi Freedom. And I always question if that was a correct war, but at least it sort of fit the definition of what is actually a war, which the war on drugs, crime and the war on poverty did not.

I think that the number one step that I call for everybody is let's stop declaring war on ourselves. These are people that are in poverty, trying to find out how to live as single moms, or to bring the families together, because in our work, we see the absent father as a major major issue, or not having

two parents because it's not only just the father, it's also mothers that are—are gone as well.

And then with our war on crime, to keep ourselves safe, sometimes we go too far in those wars. So that's really my appeal to this work is to stop declaring war. Let's look at our policies. Let's look at how we're trying bring people out of poverty, how we're trying—you



They stopped the program and we were out of money. We had 40 employees and I had to bring the men in and say I can't pay you.

— Eugene Potter

know, the welfare system, it ended up being an enabling system.

But the war on crime has, obviously, incarcerated way more people than it should have, as did the war on drugs. So that's really my call in this work is let's stop declaring war. God doesn't want us to declare war, at least I don't think, on each other.

EUGENE POTTER: Let me speak on that one point. A few years back, about five years back, we were with Gregg in a program that lasted about a year, two years—

GREGG KEESLING: Three years.

EUGENE POTTER: —and it was an outstanding program. We had men and women that pretty much had never worked, never worked. And one of the men got dropped off at his program, but his uncle basically was with him that dropped him off and said well, would you want to come over to New Life [Development Ministries], and the

guy didn't know anything about us, but he came.

Now, he had been incarcerated 53 times in the city lockup. He had 13 felonies and he had been to the penitentiary six times.

He went to Goodwill and he couldn't get a job. Now, Gregg and my responsibility in this program was to go back and forth providing employment and training. If he

couldn't handle a person, I would take him. If I couldn't he'd take him.

This man came to work for us and he had no skills. One day I saw him working on a car, and I said that's a transferable skill into plumbing. We put him with our master plumber, and guess what he is today, a plumber.

You're talking about people that want to work. This is an indictment now of others that don't help, to the organizations that won't give us resources, to people who won't give us money and won't give us the support when we do all the work to rehabilitate people that otherwise will be going right back to prison after committing more crimes. They stopped the program and we were out of money. We had 40 employees and I had to bring the men in and say I can't pay you. I had to make a decision who was going to get cut.

So this man sat in front of me and he says, "I'm not going

anywhere.” He said, “I’m going to come to your place and sit in front of your place no matter what.” He’s not gone back to prison, and he has all the skills necessary to do every kind of work in construction. If a person has a job, you change them 100 percent. It takes about six to eight months to really get someone proficient in an area. But it changes their lives.

NANCY COTTERILL: And it saves the state a great deal of money when they don’t return to crime, then prison, and the expense of that to the taxpayers. I know in 2015 the cost for each inmate per year was over \$18,000.

GREGG KEESLING: Yep, that’s the study that I talked about earlier, the same study that Gene was referring to. And we think that at some level that we need to have a small amount of subsidy so we can move into more automation. There are fewer people in the work force—I think we’re down to 60 percent work force participation rate, and we’ve got to figure out ways to subsidize work that might not get done otherwise.

NANCY COTTERILL: So what can we do? If we wanted to get two takeaways from our discussion tonight, things that people, individuals can do who are here tonight, watching this online, or reading this, what are the things that they could do through an organization that they’re involved with, to encourage growth of opportunities for people who have been in prison and more broadly, a growth of opportunity in our urban areas where there is just a dearth of jobs?

JOHN GIRTON: I’m going to just—just sort of chime in on a little bit of what we have here and in other neighborhoods around town—just

the idea that lots of people have about those who are looking for work. I don’t know how else to say that because there’s an assumption that people are not working because they’re lazy. And I remember walking downtown and a guy came up to me and he asked me for some money and I said, “Well, I was getting ready to ask you.” And he said, “Well, I don’t have a job.” I said, “I don’t either, the only difference is that when I got up this morning, I decided that I was going to walk out of my house as if I had one,” you know.

But this young—this person that I was talking to at that time just—I wanted to help him but not hurt him with a preconceived notion because that’s the way people would look at me. They saw how I was and they assumed that I had a job. They assumed that I had money.

And so I think it goes both ways. So to assume that that person doesn’t want to work, is the wrong assumption. This preconceived notion that folks have about those who are unemployed. All they’re saying is give me a shot.

JENNIFER FOLEY: In my job, I work with almost every employee one-on-one, and I’m humbled every day by the stories of what people are dealing with. We have employees—it takes two hours for them to get to work and two hours to get home.

And we were addressing the transportation issue, and our warehouse is located in the industrial section in Indianapolis on the southwest side, and if you look at the bus routes, like a circle, in one-fourth of that pie, there are no bus routes over there whatsoever.

So we’re looking at actually changing our hours so that they can at least walk over to Meridian

and catch the bus. But I have seen, you know, this whole aspect of thinking that people are lazy, I’m just always empowered and impressed by the people who, with what they’re dealing with, actually come to work.

And we have a perfect attendance award, and it’s always full every month—I mean, people are there. I have not seen lazy whatsoever. We have people that it’s like, okay, you need to go home. They’re asking for overtime. It’s just incredible.

NANCY COTTERILL: It sounds to me like one of the takeaways here is that we need to be more flexible.

JENNIFER FOLEY: Yes.

NANCY COTTERILL: We need to be more flexible in—like you said, maybe change the hours, maybe change the bus route, see what we can do to get people to the jobs and realize that they might not have a car, they need help to get there, and if they’re not working, that could be why.

JENNIFER FOLEY: Yes. We’re trying also within our company to have a car pool basically where our drivers are paid for the gas and drive in different sections of Indianapolis to help pick up other employees. We’re still new with that, but transportation is really a big issue.

NANCY COTTERILL: And you started to say this, and I know that Pastor Girton has said this before, get a job, get a better job, get a career.

GREGG KEESLING: A, B, C. Get a job, better job, career.

And my appeal is—you know, since I’ve been doing this work, the Department of Correction budget, I think, has grown from about \$200 million to \$1.2 billion.

I know in our city budget, we spend about a billion, a little over a billion dollars, and 92 cents of every dollar are spent on the courts, the police, the sheriff, probation, and the jail.

And so I'm making this a movement. We decry the growth of government, and we're all complaining about how high the cost of government is, but nobody ever talks about the rapid rise of cost in our criminal justice system. So I'm asking for a two percent shift, that we begin to think how we can move two percent of our criminal justice budget into subsidized employment.

I know if Purposeful Design could do it, Goodwill is doing it now, we're doing it, and Jenny has done it with us before.

JENNIFER FOLEY: Several times. And I do think it's important to add that there are incentives for employers who hire felons. There's a work opportunity tax credit and there's also a federal bonding program so it may be something that local employers could look into.

GREGG KEESLING: You know, it brings up the question of where does capitalism start? How is supportive employment supposed to work?

NANCY COTTERILL: And, it doesn't have to be forever.

GREGG KEESLING: It doesn't. It's not. It's a transitional job. It's a period of time. It gets cheaper. We have a young man who was featured in a story that was done on our company in the *Atlantic*. He's 19 years old. He was first incarcerated in 2015. We spent \$85,000 of taxpayer dollars incarcerating him. We've spent \$1,000 in subsidized employment, and we're out of money.

Just like Gene was saying, We have some revenue, but not enough to train and work creatively with the folks that need our help and get them really ready to stay out of trouble without being subsidized. We need probation and parole folks to work with



“The unemployment crisis in our urban neighborhoods is a big contributor to the high poverty rates...Poverty and unemployment go hand in hand.”

— *Nancy Cotterill*

us, bring the courts in so we can give this man a fighting chance to develop a work history—what we call developing the work muscle, so they can move to the better job and then move to the career. So that's my appeal, two percent everybody, two percent two percent of a budget transfer to help.

NANCY COTTERILL: And is the city and state on board with this idea?

GREGG KEESLING: I think the city is. I'm still working with the state. We've just selected Indiana State Senator, Rod Bray, as the new Senate President Pro Tem and we may be meeting with him soon to begin to talk about this issue.

Both sides of the aisle are beginning to realize that the cost of incarcerating everyone is eating us alive and there're better ways to do this.

EUGENE POTTER: I believe we have to rethink how we go after helping the providers. I had a funder, who was underwriting the gap between the revenues I could bring in with these trainees and

what it actually cost us to train them. So they wrote me a letter after funding us many many times, and they said we don't think we want to re-fund you because we don't think it's a good return on investment.

Wow! And our national recidi-

vism average on three years is seven to 15 percent, and we were working with maybe 30, 40 guys at a time. So if you take the cost now, which is around \$25,000 per year [to incarcerate a person] times the 40 guys that I had and measure that against the \$40,000 I needed to help them get on their feet, you're talking about a substantial savings in both dollars and human capital. If that isn't a great return on investment, I don't know what is.

NANCY COTTERILL: Right, and the recidivism rate is, what, like 35 percent, 38 percent?

GREGG KEESLING: In Marion County it is about 50 percent.

NANCY COTTERILL: So you were doing really well.

EUGENE POTTER: We were. The national average on three years is about 67 to 70 percent.

NANCY COTTERILL: And, we can only believe conversations like this will help to bring those numbers

down. So, now, we have used all our time, and I can't tell you how grateful I am for your input and dedication to this subject. We've learned a lot from each of you and hope that people who read this will join us to change the picture for those who need work in our urban areas.

(Audience applauded.)

are looking at it purely from a financial standpoint. Employer education is a big thing.

Probably Take Away No. 2 is the need for flexibility from the employers and others who will make it possible to help make that job work for the employee as well as the employer. This will take understanding and on the part of transportation providers and

individual. A small adjustment that allows us to really see the person without a title, knowing that it is the person that matters.

You know, the one thing that I kept thinking about as I listened tonight was a trip I took with a group that included David Palmer a few years ago. We went down to Camp Hebron in southern Indiana, which is Wheeler Mission's drug recovery program location. We were in chapel there, and then I went also to a chapel service in Pendleton Correctional Facility one night. In both cases, what really hit me was that the men that were on each side of me were not much different than I was.

In some cases, we grew up in similar situations, in terms of families, income level about the same, but they made one big mistake in their lives, one really bad choice, and they ended up being incarcerated.

I realized that that could have been me. It could possibly have been you. So I think if we can gain an understanding that—except for the grace of God, we are where we are and they're in a detention facility right now, we would want to do everything we could do to help them start over.

I know this is an issue you are all pretty concerned about because you chose to spend the evening with us tonight. Thank you for coming tonight—for caring about this issue which affects us all. Please visit UniteIndy.org and you'll see buttons for volunteer opportunities and partnering and items needed right on the home page. Just click on those buttons to see if anything intrigues you in terms of getting involved and maybe taking that first step to become part of the solution. We can make a difference... together!

3 TAKE-AWAYS

1. Employer Education:

Ex-offenders exhibit loyalty and low or no absenteeism and programs are available to help employers with costs of training

2. Be Flexible:

Whether it be scheduling, transportation issues, or the need to check in with parole agencies, a little flexibility on the part of employers can allow a great employee to keep working

3. Attitude Adjustment:

Most people want to work and those out of work are not lazy. We have to refuse to size people up by whether or not they have a job and instead, give them a chance to work.

JIM COTTERILL: I think I heard at least three promising take-aways. As I said earlier—and I saw a lot of people nodding their heads—the reason many people don't get involved with issues that would help their neighbors is because they're just not aware of the problems.

We know this: There are a lot of employers right now who are just uninformed about the opportunity that could be before them. So Take Away No. 1 would be to get information to employers and let them know these great stories about the loyalty and retention rate and the lack of absenteeism of many ex-offenders and the government subsidies that may be available to employers, that would make a difference to a lot of employers who

others as well. Just being flexible, in terms of schedules and helping people to handle all their issues with the courts as they try to learn a trade and earn money to support themselves and their families, can be make it or break it for many people.

And Take Away No. 3 is under the category of attitude adjustment. Being out of work for anyone is a difficult situation. We were made to work. Most people want to work and even if they don't they realize the necessity of work. As Pastor John Girton said, we have to remove judgement of people who are not attached to a business card at the moment. We have to refuse to size people up by attaching them to a certain job. That's a take away for every

Kurt Moore continued from page 5

KURT MOORE: The biggest blessing that I have now, what I'm most passionate about, is the boot camp that Pastor Webster has developed and extended his arm and mentored me, but also it has opened up the door for me to start a mentoring program myself, which is called Str8Up Mentoring Foundation. We started at Arlington High School about four years ago, and we went just with the idea to give a charity basketball game. But the Principal, Stan Law gave us a chance to expand that program and walk alongside some of these young men who can go week in, week out without being in the presence of a real man.

So we went in there and we started mentoring these young men. I asked them to give me their 25 worst kids, and he gave me 25 seventh and eighth grade boys. All were borderline dysfunctional. Over half of them had already been through the juvenile system, and most of them had no father in the home.

Within seven to eight weeks, we turned their grades around by 70 percent. We turned their character around, their behavior around, so they were no longer getting in trouble, or getting suspended and so forth.

So from that, we started bringing in other guys who were ex-felons. We started bringing in sports players and others to talk to these young men.

But we knew we had to get them out of the hood, so to speak, because if all they see is the hood, that's all they are going to know. So we started taking them on college field trips and so forth.

But then from watching Steve Harvey one day and I saw this camp that he gives every summer. He has thousands of kids at this camp. So I

said, man, you know, what? I can't get the same celebrities that Steve Harvey has at his camp but the message can still be the same.

The message is, first of all, give your life to God, but second and most importantly, let's build your character. So I went to the principal, I said I need 100 boys. So I gave our first Str8Up Mentoring 100-boy



I asked them to give me their 25 worst kids, and he gave me 25 seventh and eighth grade boys. All were borderline dysfunctional. Over half of them had already been through the juvenile system, and most of them had no father in the home.

— Kurt Moore

camp. Now we have given eight. Two weeks ago we gave one for 100 boys, they threw in 50 girls, which was a challenge, but they threw in 50 girls.

The basis of the camp is to build character. But to take inner city kids out of their element, to see these kids hiking through the woods, on the canoes, playing, teaching them team work and so forth is just a blessing, that's—it's priceless, you know.

And now I have other schools—Tech and Attucks that have come along and decided they want our program there.

As I told Pastor, there are a lot of great programs and organizations here in the city, but there's nobody to link the great organizations or the great people or even some of the great churches to these young men and women who are coming

out of prison, or to these kids that are in school and just don't know which way to go.

JIM COTTERILL: And that is exactly what UNITE INDY is doing every day and it is a big big job, but in a short time we have created a good number of important connections and we are going to continue that until our whole city is aware and

engaged in raising the prospects for all those who call Indianapolis home.

Your story is inspiring Kurt, and I just want to congratulate you on your business success. And for those who want to know more give us some information about K-love's Auto Detailing.

KURT MOORE: Sure, we're located at 2260 East 38th Street, which is one block west of Keystone. We're open Monday through Saturday, eight to six. We detail cars. We wash cars, and whatever has to do with your car, we get it right. We're online at klovesautodetailing.com.

JIM COTTERILL: Thank you Kurt for being with us and for all you do.

KURT MOORE: God bless you, sir.

(Audience applauded.)

David Palmer continued from page 7

things are going well, it's real easy for me to find myself kind of beating my chest thinking wow, haven't I done well here. And so to combat that, the Lord gave me an idea. You asked about business—for me, this isn't really about a business journey.

JIM COTTERILL: Right.

The men that we work with have come from a life of being a destroyer, in the way they were living, they were destroying everything within reach and some things that probably weren't within reach—their families, their jobs, any possessions they destroyed, all their relationships—I mean, everything was destroyed in their path.

—David Palmer



DAVID PALMER: You know, they—I know they love it. It means a lot to them. The men that we work with have come from a life of being a destroyer, in the way they were living, they were destroying everything within reach and some things that probably weren't within reach—their families, their jobs, any possessions they destroyed, all their relationships—I mean, everything was destroyed in their path. Now they're making

not taking home a paycheck.

One of our guys burned his family once by coming in at night—he didn't live there, but he came back at night and he left with the refrigerator and the stove because he could get some money for them. But now, it's a different story. He's a source of good for his reunited family and he has pride in that.

JIM COTTERILL: I know you'd like to reach more men who have life issues...

DAVID PALMER: Funny you should say that! We are very excited about a new program we have introduced called the School of Woodworking and Discipleship, where men from Wheeler Mission, and re-entrants, maybe some young men from high schools in the area will be able to take a no cost class aimed at restoration and the creation of a path to employment. The 12-session course will train them in woodworking, job readiness skills and discipleship training.

JIM COTTERILL: That is so great. And now you've moved into a larger facility. I know you are at *pdindy.com* on the web; is that right?

DAVID PALMER: Yes. And we're at the northeast corner of 16th and Sherman. We'd love to have visitors come and tour.

JIM COTTERILL: You've got to see it. It's amazing. And the thing to do is to talk to the men who work there because it means so much to them. What you've done for them is just incredible. Thank you David!

(Audience applauded.)

DAVID PALMER: This is about a journey toward the Lord. So what I do now very frequently to combat my natural inclination to be puffed up with pride, as things are going well, is that I now have a habit where I get down on my knees right away, when something good happens, I give thanks to the Lord, just as a reminder to me about who's at work at here. If there's something good, it is the work of the Lord, it is not my genius that came up with it.

JIM COTTERILL: And what do you think the organization means to the men who work there?

beautiful things that people ooh and ahh over, and people are saying this is quality.

Eli Lilly for example has four quality brackets, A, B, C and D, and they say that the furniture that our men make is in the A quality bracket, that no supplier of Eli Lilly Company is in a higher quality bracket than the things our men are making.

So that gives them a sense of hope and confidence, and not only that, but as they're making furniture but they're taking home a paycheck to maybe a wife, maybe some kids where, before, they were



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